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Current Intelligence Analysis

August 19, 1959

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COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

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A "Most Urgent" Survey

Considering the circumstances, it was not too difficult for Party members to guess the secret. The survey was coordinated by one of the Party's national leaders, Arnold Johnson, who made a six-day whirlwind trip by air from the east coast to the west coast and back. Johnson, national legislative director of the Party, contacted top functionaries of the Party in Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. In each city, he created a storm of activity, impressing everyone with the "most urgent" nature of his business.

Americana at Its Worst

Johnson concluded his trip on August 12, 1959, arriving back in New York City with an estimated 35 pounds of accumulated notes. Included were such pertinent facts as the location of slum areas in the major cities; the extent to which these areas are populated by Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and various nationality groups; and the places where the largest number of people congregate in the larger cities as well as the time of day the largest concentration occurs in industrial and shopping areas. With such items topping the list, the completed survey represented a comprehensive study on Americana at its worst.

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Newspaper Staff Used in Survey

In San Francisco, the staff of the Party's west coast newspaper, People's World, was of invaluable assistance in the survey. While Johnson, posing as a "free-lance writer on a special assignment," was busy accumulating information at such places as the Department of Industrial Relations, the Housing Authority, Planning Commission, Redevelopment Agency, and the Chamber of Commerce, his local temporary aides compiled material on such items as the cost of living, unemployment statistics, alcohol consumption, the migrant-labor situation, and similar subjects.

An "Objective" Job

Johnson followed the same pattern of activity in Los Angeles that he had in San Francisco. He skimmed the sour cream, so to speak, from the bottle of old problems that sits on the doorstep of many large cities--unemployment claims, racial tensions, and the like. He poured over reports concerning the status of Negroes--ratio to whites, number unemployed, types of employment, housing, percentage of male and female, and percentage of juvenile delinquents. "Hooliganism," American style, proved to be a favorite research topic. In fact, Johnson even paid a visit to the Los Angeles Police Department to obtain the number of juveniles arrested during the period 1957-58.

The Full Picture

Johnson also found a fertile field in Chicago. Party functionaries there filled his book with material on nationality groups, AFL-CIO union membership figures, the number of labor strikes that had occurred between 1952 and 1958, and the number of arrests for strike activity, in addition to such "standard" material as unemployment figures and the number on relief rolls. By the time he landed in New York City, Johnson had acquitted himself well in the eyes of Party leaders.

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Khrushchev Invited to Anniversary Fete

Perhaps the Party even included in its survey the fact that one of the large congregations that will occur during the period of Khrushchev's visit in September will be a gathering of Party members to celebrate its 40th anniversary. The Party did extend to him an invitation to be present for the occasion and to address the gathering. The Party may hope that, as a reward for the special services it has performed, Khrushchev will accept the invitation.